



# Elisha

“The Faithful”

*“I pray thee; let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.” II Kings 2:9*

Like so many of the disciples, and other people we have come to know through the Bible, Elisha was called by God from the fields to follow in the footsteps of Elijah. The two are often compared because they worked together for a while and both worked in the northern kingdom of Israel, but there are many differences in their ways also. Elijah just appeared one day and is sent to Ahab to warn him. Elisha had a family and was a worker in the fields. Elijah lived in caves in the desert, Elisha stayed in the cities. We are told Elisha was bald; Elijah was very hairy. I’m not sure why that is significant but it seems to be mentioned in almost every commentary!

We first meet Elisha when he is plowing the fields with twelve yoke of oxen. Elijah went to him and threw his cloak over him. Elisha knew he had been blessed, but he had a concern. He ran after Elijah and asked if he could go kiss his father and mother good-bye and then he would follow Elijah. Elijah told him he could. Elisha butchered his oxen and fixed a farewell meal for his family and then left to follow Elijah. Life wasn’t any easier for Elisha than it had been for Elijah. Many of the worshippers of Baal had been killed, but Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, was still alive and doing her best to destroy the Truth with her son at her side.

Elisha knew that Elijah was doing God’s work and he wanted to do right, but he felt helpless. One day as they were discussing the fact that Elijah was going to be leaving soon, Elijah asked Elisha what he would want him to do. Elisha answered that he wanted a double portion of God’s spirit. Elijah said God would grant that. Then as Elijah and Elisha were talking a strong wind arose and horses and chariots of fire came down and took Elijah. Elisha took the cloak of Elijah and swung it at the river and the river divided and Elisha walked through. Some prophets from Jericho were there to see it and they knew that the spirit of God was alive in Elisha as it had been in Elijah.

Elisha did not want to outdo Elijah for his own pride; Elisha wanted to do great things for God. And God granted Elisha's request. During his lifetime, Elisha did nearly twice as many miracles as Elijah.

When we ask God for something, we need to make sure it is not in a selfish way. And, we need to realize that God will answer our request, maybe not in the way we ask, but in the way He thinks is best for us. He knows what we can do and He will not ever ask us to do more than we can handle with His help. When our motive is to glorify and serve God, He will answer in ways we never could imagine.

Elisha continued the work Elijah had begun and did much more. His work was both personal and political. He also, through the love of God, was able to raise the dead son of the Shunammite woman back to life. With a few grains of salt he purified the water in a town.

Elisha handled things in many different ways. One time when the king of Aram wanted war with Israel he wanted an ambush set up. Elisha warned the king of Israel about the ambush and the king of Aram was furious. They went and surrounded the city thinking they could capture Elisha. They next morning one of Elisha's servants went out and saw the horses and chariots surrounding the city. He reported it to Elisha and Elisha said “Don’t worry about it; there are more on our side than on their side.” He asked God to open the eyes of the young servant and he saw the whole mountainside full of horses and chariots of fire to protect Elisha. When the army from the king of Aram attacked Elisha asked God to strike them blind. Then Elisha called out to them and led them into Samaria. When Elisha had God open their eyes, they knew they were trapped. But Elisha didn’t kill them. He fed them and sent them back to their master. They didn’t bother Israel any more.

Does this story tell us how we should treat our enemy? We are told to overcome evil with love. Elisha did that, but he had God’s help. We have God’s help also, if we ask for it. We can handle many difficult situations if we ask God to help us rather than trying to do it on our own.

With God’s help Elisha performed many miracles including healing lepers, providing an antidote for a poisonous stew, and providing water to a thirty army, just to name a few. When Elisha lay dying, Jehoash, king of Israel, came, and wept over him. Elisha told the king to shoot an arrow out of the window, and strike the ground with the quiver. This would show God’s power to help Israel. After Elisha did that, he died. His job was finished on this earth.

Prayer: Lord God of Israel, You don’t ask us to do much and yet we seem to think that it is so much at times. Through the death and resurrection of Your Son, all we have to do is accept Christ as our

personal Saviour. Help us to be thankful for that wonderful gift and do our best to tell everyone we meet that You are an awesome God, gracious, tender, and just for each one of us. Amen

1. God's chose Elisha from ploughing the fields. How does he choose you? Do you have free will to accept Him or reject Him?
2. Does God perform miracles for you?
3. Can you explain God's sovereign will and how it affects man's free will?
4. How can we seek God's will for our lives?
5. Explain "Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life."

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